

CHEESE/CHEESE ALTERNATE BLENDS

PURPOSE: This instruction sets forth policy with respect to cheese/cheese alternate blends, their use in cold applications and crediting in the Child Nutrition Programs.

SCOPE: School food authorities participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program.

DESCRIPTION: FNS has done research to determine why blended cheese/cheese alternate products Regulation (7 CFR Part 210, Appendix A) requires the product to be heated before eaten. It was found in a 1973 report that cheese alternates did not have acceptable flavor when served cold.

Since 1973, we believe the flavor/taste of today's cheese alternates should be acceptable for use in the Child Nutrition Programs cold as well as heated. FNS is therefore allowing blended cheese/cheese alternates to be served either hot or cold. This does not change the requirement for all approved cheese alternates to be blended with at least 50 percent natural or processed cheese.

The cheese alternate may meet no more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternate requirement. The cheese alternate must be combined with natural or processed cheese.

Only cheese alternates that appear on the USDA "Listing of Acceptable Cheese Alternate Products" and have substantially the following statement on the label may be used: "This product meets USDA-FNS specifications for cheese alternate products."

SOURCE: Menu Planning Guide for School Food Service; Program Aid Number 1260, p. 13, and Memorandum from Robert W. Dean, Regional Nutrition Coordinator; July 13, 1992.